

Ten students in a North Naples Middle School, in the Collier County School District, were suspended after determining that they participated in “kick a Jew day.”

This incident of singling out Jewish students for ridicule and harm is extremely alarming. A school should be a safe and open learning environment for all students, not a place of abuse and mockery. One can only speculate about the factors that contributed to these students acting out in this appalling way, but no matter what there should be a zero tolerance policy for this type of behavior.

I am pleased that Principal Margaret Jackson is taking a strong stance against violence and religious intolerance and am encouraged by her thoughtful and speedy response to this incident. This incident of prejudice was met with strong educational programming dealing with diversity and religious tolerance. I am pleased these programs were implemented immediately and effectively. No more students should be harmed physically or emotionally due to any form of intolerance.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have fought all forms of religious discrimination wherever it takes place. The seeds of hate must not be allowed to root themselves in our communities.

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